

Question on Notice

No. 1153

Asked on 6 September 2018

MR M HEALY ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise the benefits that the Interstate Certification Assurance agreement will offer to Queensland's banana industry?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) Operational Procedure 'Inspection of Bananas for Freedom of Soil and Plant Material' (ICA-67) was developed to provide a cost-effective alternative to quarantine certification issued by Queensland Government Inspectors.

Fruit certified in accordance with Operational Procedure ICA-67 will meet New South Wales quarantine import requirements that apply to bananas sourced from a property where Panama disease tropical race 4 has been confirmed.

The ICA Scheme provides substantial benefits over traditional plant quarantine certification techniques for individual farmers, and for the banana industry as a whole, that include:

- increased flexibility in operational planning as businesses are no longer dependent on the presence of a government inspector to provide certification
- improved operational control as process requirements, process controls and staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and well documented
- improved staff participation in ensuring effective fruit inspection through formal training and documented procedures
- reduced certification costs
- government resources previously needed for plant quarantine certification are able to be reassigned to other high priority activities such as surveillance and monitoring for Panama disease tropical race 4 and management of disease incursions
- reduced disruptions to market access through improved quarantine systems and reduced system failures
- improved industry awareness of quality assurance and quality management leading to improvements in industry efficiency and customer satisfaction.

This is another demonstration of the Queensland Government working with individual growers to enable continued trade in the face of the disease, while protecting the broader industry from the risk of spread of the disease.